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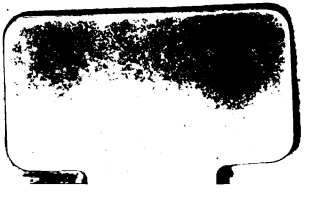

CHRISTIAN TRIALS.

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CHRISTIAN TRIALS.

A NARRATIVE

FROM REAL LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'THE BREAD OF DECEIT;' 'THE WAY OF PEACE;'

'THE FIRST LENT LILIES;' &c.

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." 1 Peter iv. 14.

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CHRISTIAN TRIALS.

CHAPTER I.

A WORD SPOKEN IN DUE SEASON, HOW GOOD IS IT!—PROV. XV. 23.

THE following narrative is drawn from real life. With the exception of a few trifling particulars, and a change, for obvious reasons, in the names of individuals, I have neither added nor omitted any thing that could affect its faithfulness: and I trust that the example it conveys of the mercy of Providence and of Christian faith, will be brought home to the hearts of many readers. For myself, I

desire to acknowledge that a personal acquaintance with the man whom I have distinguished by the name of Alfred Travis, has afforded me lessons equally useful and affecting.

At the period when I propose to commence my humble history, Alfred was honest and industrious, and generally speaking, affectionate towards his family. But the world was his chief concern; and any thing that interrupted the course of his ordinary pursuits and enjoyments, provoked him to anger or drove him to the public house.

Martha his wife, was happily under the influence of different feelings. Although her education had been neglected by her parents, a Sunday School was the means of communicating that religious knowledge which has been blessed to thousands, and was in her case at last, it is hoped, the source of everlasting comfort. For

some years, however, the fruit of these instructions was not evident, but was like *bread cast upon the waters.* It was only a short time previous to the date of my acquaintance with the family, that the seed thus sown, was beginning to yield its spiritual harvest. Reading, as she did but imperfectly, the many portions of Scripture, which, as a Sunday Scholar, she had committed to memory, now returned with a power and consolation not to be described.

Autumn had commenced its course with its usual rich and varied productions. Already the vine displayed its clustering fruit, and the orchards their ripening stores. In some fields the standing corn still waved in the breeze, while in others the grain had yielded to the sickle, and now stood in compact sheaves. Old age and youth were alike employed in gathering the fruits of the season, and the

harvest-field and hop-ground bore their recurring testimony to the Divine promise, that *while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest shall not cease.* (Gen. viii. 22.)

Martha had risen in the morning with the intention of attending the dispensary, and afterwards joining her husband and family in the hop-ground. The sun shone brightly as Alfred set out for the field, accompanied by his six children. He took the youngest in his arms on leaving the house, and looking kindly at his wife observed, 'that such fine weather must surely restore her health.' Martha said little in reply; feeling conscious of declining strength, and the slow, but irresistible progress of disease. Having concluded her domestic duties, she read a few verses in her Testament, and with a short, but earnest prayer, that she might receive them in their true, spiritual

application, she closed her book, and proceeded towards the dispensary. A week had elapsed since her last attendance, and in that interval, her health had evidently altered for the worse. The doctor looked grave, as he perceived the efforts of medicine to be unavailing; and addressing her in a tone of sympathy, asked her if she was able to afford the necessary expences of illness.

'Hitherto, Sir,' said she, 'we have been enabled, I thank God, to pay every one their own.'

'Your husband is a fisherman, I think, is he at sea now?'

'No, Sir, he can earn more just at present by hop-picking, at other times he has a regular berth in Wilson's boat; but the greater part of the men lay aside their usual business at this season to work in the hop-ground: their profits are more certain, especially when their families are large.'

'Are your children of an age to help you?'

'They are young, but they do their best, poor things, and every little helps. Our oldest is nearly nine years old.'

'And how many younger?'

'Five, Sir, they are all gone with their father.'

'So much the better, you may enjoy a little rest and quiet.'

'Oh, they are good children Sir, and very obedient; I am going after them now.'

'Where are you going'? demanded the Doctor abruptly.'

'To Mr. Linley's hop-ground Sir.'

'The hop-ground! poor creature, you are only fit for a hospital—you cannot work, you must give up the very idea. Where is the use of distressing yourself to walk that distance?'

A crimson flush passed over Martha's

pallid cheek as she replied faintly. 'It is but little I can do now, but I wish to help my family as long as I am with them.' The doctor was silent for a few moments, he saw the impression his words had produced, and half reproached himself for uttering them. 'My good woman,' said he in a more gentle tone, 'you must endeavour to keep both body and mind as quiet as you can, and see what that will do for you; here is a shilling to procure any comforts you may need, and I will see you again in a few days.' Martha thanked him, and withdrew with an aching heart. She had lately often contemplated the probable issue of her illness with a tranquil mind, but now that the prospect was suddenly brought more nearly and certainly before her, her heart failed, and the thoughts of separation from those she loved on earth, for a while overcame her feelings and her faith. The retirement of

her own dwelling seemed most congenial to her frame of mind, but after the first burst of sorrow had somewhat relieved itself by tears, she resolved to pursue her first intention, and, accordingly bent her steps towards the field where her husband and family were engaged. It was indeed a busy scene, and one in which all ages seemed to unite with feelings of cheerful interest. On arriving at the spot, Martha looked for her husband and children. They were all together, pursuing their easy labour, with the exception of the youngest, who was seated on the fresh springing grass, and sported with a sheep-dog that guarded its master's coat under the shade of a branching tree. Martha made an effort to return the smiles of her little ones as they pressed forward to display the tokens of their industry, and her walk having imparted a fresher hue to her cheeks, no one guessed the struggle

that passed within. She joined the busy throng. A few paces distant stood an aged labourer, who conversed cheerfully with those around him without interrupting his work.

'This is a grand season,' observed one of the workmen, 'see how the bines have grown; what a wonderful weight of fruit for so weak a plant!'

'It could not have borne that weight,' said the old man, 'unless it had been supported by a strong prop, so likewise ought all men to cling to that Being who alone is the Christian's strength.'

'You speak of such as are in sickness or adversity, I suppose,' remarked a fellow workman.

'I speak of a refuge from every evil, spiritual or temporal,' replied the old man. 'Our nature since the fall of Adam is such, that of ourselves, we have neither help, righteousness, nor salva-

tion, yet all are freely provided by a merciful God, for those who draw near to him, with faith in his dear son. He is strong to support and to save, and we cannot stand without him: he is a glorious aid to lean upon, as says the prophet;—*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the* LORD JEHOVAH *is everlasting strength.* (Isaiah xxvi. 3, 4.)

These words sank deeply into the mind of Martha, who had listened to this short dialogue with silent but intense interest. Her drooping spirits seemed to revive as she reflected upon these gracious promises, and she breathed a fervent prayer, that in all her trials, she might look with faith to a once suffering, but now exalted Saviour, and be enabled to say with the Psalmist. *God is my refuge and strength,*

a very present help in trouble. (Psalm xlvi. 1.) She returned home with the full intention of acquainting her husband with the state of her past and present feelings, but circumstances forbade the disclosure that night; she had unconsciously exerted herself far beyond the extent of her bodily powers, and on entering the house she suddenly turned pale, and sank to the floor in a swoon. Alfred was alarmed, and watched the countenance of his wife with anxious solicitude, while he quickly dispatched one of the children to obtain further assistance. In the course of a few minutes a neighbour looked in and lent her aid, and by the blessing of God on their united efforts the poor woman was gradually restored. As her wandering senses returned, a confused impression of the events of the day seemed present in her mind. Her lips moved, as if in inward prayer, as she

directed an anxious glance towards her little ones. While pressing her husband's hand with earnestness, she said in faltering accents. 'Alfred! I am not long for this world; but if I can only turn to the strong hold, I need fear no evil; pray that I may commit my soul to my Saviour's keeping—Pray that his rod and staff may comfort me *through the valley of the shadow of death.*'

CHAPTER II.

MY FLESH AND MY HEART FAILETH; BUT GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART, AND MY PORTION FOR EVER.—Psalm lxxiii 26.

ON the following morning, Martha was sufficiently recovered to converse in a calm manner with those around her. To her husband she candidly opened her mind. 'The doctor has told me the truth as far as he can judge, Alfred,' said she, 'and the first shock is now over. Our trial will be heavy, but Christ is the rock on whom I lean, and that rock will not fail me in my last hour; but give me your prayers,' continued she in a lower tone of voice, 'and let me see a Minister of the Gospel without loss of time.'

Alfred had listened with silent grief

to his wife's first expressions; but a sudden cloud came over his face as he heard her desire to be visited by a clergyman. He seldom entered a place of worship himself, for he *loved darkness rather than light.*

On one occasion the Clergyman of the parish had kindly endeavoured to rouse him from his state of spiritual indifference, but without success. The pride of a carnal mind can seldom bear counsel, and as Alfred scarcely ever thought of eternity, he rejected any advice that opposed his inclinations. He was, however, a kind-hearted man, and as he looked upon his wife's wasted frame, his conscience smote him, for having too often been himself the hindrance to her attending Divine Service as she wished. 'One of the children shall tell Mr. Brook you wish to see him,' said he in a softened tone of voice. 'Will you not tell him yourself, dear Alfred?' said

his wife, with a look that seconded the request, as the earnest wish of her heart. Alfred was silent; his heart was so proud, that he had never forgiven the Clergyman for his advice; on the other hand, he could scarcely bring himself to wound his wife's feelings by a direct refusal. After an inward struggle, his kinder emotions prevailed, and he replied, that he would speak himself to Mr. Brook, if she wished it. Poor Martha was overjoyed beyond expression at his acquiescence. She thanked her husband with tears in her eyes, and added that it would be a great comfort to her if he would call on Mr. Brook that very day.

Alfred took his hat and went out immediately; when he made the promise, he intended to keep it, but alas! *the heart is deceitful above all things;* (Jerem. xvii. 9.) and the most experienced Christian feels his constant need of *the whole*

armour of God, that he may be able to *stand against the wiles of the devil.* (Eph. vi. 11.) Travis had never felt this need; he was too proud to pray for the cleansing of a corrupt heart, or even to think that he had one. If any event disposed him to reflect on a future state, he soon repelled a thought to him so gloomy, while at the same time he endeavoured to whisper peace to his conscience, by flattering himself that as he led a more moral life than many of his companions, he was sure to go to heaven. Under so fatal a delusion, we have less reason to be surprised at his conduct in the present instance; as soon as he had passed his threshold, he began to contemplate the consequences of his promise, and at length, his extreme dislike to personally asking the assistance of one who had offended him, predominated. He had no higher regard for truth than

its nominal estimation in the eyes of the world, and therefore, he did not hesitate to decide on deceiving his wife. So truly has the prophet said, *His soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him.* (Habak. ii. 4.) In order to effect this purpose he confided his secret to a companion of no better principles than himself, who agreed, at the request of Travis, to leave a message that night with Mr. Brook, intimating Martha's wish that he should pray with her on the following day. Matters being thus arranged, Travis returned home after an hour's absence, and made his wife's heart rejoice by telling her that he had fulfilled her desire.

'Thank you, Alfred,' said Martha; 'I felt sure you would oblige me, although you might not like to speak to Mr. Brook.'

Travis was for a moment struck with remorse; his eye fell beneath the kind looks of his wife, and he would gladly

have avoided any reference to his supposed visit to Mr. Brook. Martha perceived his agitation, and mistaking the cause, enquired, after a short interval, if he had any conversation with Mr. Brook. Travis had now gained some degree of outward composure, and observed that Mr. Brook was out when he asked for him. Nothing further was said on the subject, and time passed away smoothly, when Martha received a visit from a favourite friend, from whom she had received much kindness. Isabella Ashby was some years older than Martha, and a person of sincere and consistent piety. Her energies had been called early into activity, by numerous domestic trials. She had passed some years in service, in the family of Mr. Brook, and now resided with her father, whose declining years demanded her dutiful care. Travis felt a kind of aversion towards any one whose views of

Christianity were clearer than those of the generality of the world, and on this account, he regarded Isabella with coldness and suspicion. His own imagination, heightened by prejudice, led him to believe that he was indebted to her for the minister's advice and reprehension, and he bore her a grudge which not all her kindness towards his wife could surmount. In reality his conjectures were unfounded. Isabella was the last to raise or propagate evil reports of any one, and the insight her master had obtained into the character of Travis, was entirely drawn from his own observation.

'I am glad to see you,' said Martha, as her friend entered the room, and enquired kindly how she did,—'I rather expected you this morning; how were you employed?'

'I would have come sooner,' returned Isabella, 'but I was called away early

to wash at the Parsonage; *I* was there when little Mary Banks brought your message, but the child was so shy and confused, that Mr. Brook feared there might be some mistake, and desired me to ask whether you wished to see him this evening or to-morrow.'

On hearing these words, Martha directed a hurried glance towards Alfred, whose disturbed and angry looks confirmed the truth of Isabella's statement. Deeply grieved on discovering that she had been deceived by the very being whom she regarded as most entitled to her confidence, she followed the too common impulse of human nature, and hastily reproached her husband for having deceived her. The very feeling of having nothing to urge in his defence rendered Travis the more impatient, and his aversion for Isabella increased ten-fold with the exposure she had so unconsciously

made. In the heat of his passion, he swore at *her* as the cause of all his troubles, and pushing the youngest child from his knee, retorted harshly upon his wife, and left the house in anger. Martha was too much overcome to utter a syllable, and a few moments elapsed before the silence was broken on either side. A flood of tears came at length to the relief of the poor woman's heart, and she was enabled to enter into an explanation of what had passed.

My readers will readily perceive that Travis's friend had failed in his part of the affair. He was an idle thoughtless fellow; in other words, a public-house acquaintance, who, careless of his companion's injunctions, neglected the message until the evening. At that time, being half intoxicated, he sent a little girl to deliver it, and thus the husband's duplicity became known. Isabella was

sincerely grieved at the scenes he had reluctantly witnessed, but conscious that she had never given Travis any provocation, she freely forgave the injustice of his expressions;—thus exemplifying the conduct of Christians towards their fellow-sinners. Following the steps of her Divine master, she learned to be *tender-hearted and forgiving; to put away all bitterness, evil-speaking and malice.* (Ephes. iv. 31, 32.) and even to seek the welfare of those who had offended her.

It was now Isabella's care to soften the bitter feelings of poor Martha, whose sense of duty soon brought her to the conviction that she had followed the impulse of wrong feelings.

'You need not be afraid of speaking freely,' said she, as Isabella expressed herself on the subject with the kind and faithful interest of a friend. I would wish you to do for my dear children what

you have done for me ;—when I am gone, speak to them in the same faithful way; remind them sometimes of me, and tell them it was my first and last prayer, that they should be enabled to follow those things that belong to their eternal peace. I thank you, dear Isabella, for all that you have said to me this night; I know that no sin of mine can be atoned for by any thing less than a Saviour's blood; yet I would not willingly leave one unrepented.' We shall not dwell upon the conversation which ensued between the dying christian and her friend.

CHAPTER III.

FOR WHICH CAUSE WE FAINT NOT; BUT THOUGH OUR OUTWARD MAN PERISH, YET THE INWARD MAN IS RENEWED DAY BY DAY.—2 Cor. iv. 16.

MARTHA'S life was hastening to its close; she still however preserved sufficient strength to converse with her friends, and few who visited her could fail to estimate the value of those truths which made the evening of her day so bright. The nearer she advanced towards her eternal home, the more willing she became to resign all things into the hands of her God. She was enabled to set his grace and mercy before her under every trial, and however dark the dispensation, she experienced spiritual comfort in the belief that *the Lord waits to be*

gracious. (Isaiah xxx. 18.) Isabella called frequently to see her, but her visits on these occasions were very short. She possessed too much delicacy of feeling to wish to intrude upon Travis, and as Martha was aware of this, she never sought to detain her. Alfred felt inwardly ashamed when his wife expressed her sorrow at having offended him. It was a real grief to Martha to think that through any unkindness on her part, she might have lessened his respect for those principles by which she sought to guide her conduct; and she strove by affectionate and conciliatory behaviour to soften his prejudices. Travis was not unmoved by these efforts, and though his feelings were generally altogether of a worldly description, his heart was occasionally the seat of upbraiding reflections. Attention to the concerns of the soul, he associated with the destruction of all

enjoyment. Love to his wife, however, in her present helpless condition, induced him sometimes to offer to read to her a chapter in the Bible, and for the same reason, he behaved with greater civility to Mr. Brook, than she had ever dared to expect. Other trials which happened at the same time, tended also in some degree to humble the mind of Travis. Hop-picking being concluded, the fishermen had resumed their usual occupations, and he was often necessarily absent; but the latter part of the year brought many losses to those who plied their trade upon the deep. The herring-fishery had failed, and repeated storms reduced several industrious families to severe poverty. To add to these troubles, the season was unhealthy, and the children of Travis, amongst others, were attacked with illness. Martha was too weak to give any assistance, but in the prompt and kind

services of Isabella Ashby, she experienced more and more of the inestimable blessings which result from christian friendship. Even Travis was affected by them, and in his heart respected Isabella's conscientious principles.

One Sunday evening when the family were all assembled, Martha expressed a wish to hear her eldest child read. The little boy brought his Testament with alacrity, and turning to his last lesson at the week-day school, he read distinctly and with tolerable correctness, the Parable of the labourers in the vineyard as related in the twentieth chapter of Matthew. At the conclusion, his mother commended him, and observed in an affectionate tone, 'I am so glad that you are able to read the word of God, dear Charles, endeavour to lay it to heart, that as you grow in years, you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your

Saviour. Never play truant; remember, that you will have to account hereafter for every precious hour you have wasted; —young as you are, you have gifts to improve to the glory of God, and his service does not admit of slothfulness. If we would be saved through Christ, we must be labourers, not idlers, in the vineyard.'

The little boy looked thoughtful, and observed, 'What is meant, mother, by the labourers being called at different hours of the day?'

Martha, who was exhausted with speaking, made a sign to Isabella to give the desired explanation, and the latter accordingly answered: 'The different hours in the day, my dear, may be applied to the different periods of life, in which people really yield themselves to God's service; all who have been dedicated to Christ in baptism, have in one sense been called to work in the vineyard; but the

call to be effectual must be obeyed: and unless our hearts bring forth the fruits of the spirit, we can have no title to the spiritual blessings promised to the Lord's servants; nor can we urge, as the heathens, before they received the light of the Gospel, *that no man hath hired us.* In a christian country, where means of grace and instruction are open to all, we have daily invitations to come to Christ; and to neglect them, is to incur the awful condemnation of being *called, but not chosen.*'

'I am glad that those who came in at the eleventh hour, were not turned back,' observed the little boy, 'That was like our Saviour promising to receive the penitent thief into paradise.'

'God's mercy is, indeed, infinite,' answered Isabella, 'You know our blessed Saviour has said, *him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,* (John vi. 37) and as nothing is too hard for

divine grace, we should never be so presumptuous or uncharitable as to pronounce the repentance of any one past hope; at the same time, we have no grounds to put off the day of repentance, we are told that *the day of the Lord* will overtake careless sinners as a *thief in the night*, that *when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.* (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.) and under the figure of a tree continuing in the place where it fell, Solomon conveys the awful and important truth, that as death leaves us, so judgment will find us.' (Eccles. xi. 3.)

'It was very wrong of the first labourers to murmur against the good man of the house, when they got what they agreed for,' observed Charles.

'That applied to the envy of the Jews, who could not bear that the Gentiles should inherit the kingdom of heaven as

well as themselves; it must be an evil heart indeed, that repines at the good of others, more particularly in the display of God's mercy towards them.'

'The riches of divine grace are beautifully unfolded in that Parable,' said Martha, 'It confirms the doctrine, that God is debtor to no man, and that all that we receive, is of his mercy. If he were to pay us according to the work we had done, our wages, alas! would be those of unprofitable servants.'

Travis had been in the room throughout this little dialogue, and although he leant back in the chair, and disposed himself to sleep as soon as the child was asked to read, he had not been quite unconscious of what had passed. As his wife finished speaking, he suddenly raised his head: 'My dear,' said he, 'Do not accuse yourself of having been unprofitable; you have fulfilled your duty to

me and the children, as well as any one could have done.'—'Yes,' added he, with tears in his eyes, 'Though I say so, there is no one who better deserves a place in heaven, than yourself.'

Martha was much overcome by this expression of her husband's feelings—she pressed his hand earnestly, and during the short interval of silence which ensued, she offered up an inward prayer for his future happiness. 'My dear Alfred,' said she, 'I wish that you should rightly understand me. I hope that I have not lived wilfully in any habitual sin; but I have come far short of that love which I ought to have felt towards God. The most holy christians are still unprofitable servants. The Bible says, that if we offend in one point, we are guilty of all; (James ii. 10) and if I have often felt with shame the workings of a corrupt heart, how must I have appeared

before him *who is of purer eyes than to behold evil?* (Habak. i. 13.) *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.* (Gal. iii. 22.) I do believe in Christ with my whole heart; and though by nature a child of wrath, I trust that I have been made through his mercy, a child of grace; and I rest happy in the assurance that, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*' (Rom. v. 1.)

Here the poor woman ceased. She had spoken with great fervour, and felt much exhausted. But she had treasured in her mind, many encouraging memorials of God's mercy towards her, and she was anxious that Alfred should hear them from her own lips. As soon, therefore, as she had somewhat recovered, she again addressed him:

'I am very anxious, my dear husband, that you should know what God has done for me, and what he has promised to do for all that truly seek him. As a child, I was thoughtless and ignorant of the way of salvation, until I attended a Sunday-school, where Providence blessed the instructions afforded me—there I first learned the danger of living without prayer; and though in after years, I thought too much of the world and its vanities, I had that regard for the service of God, which led me to delight in its ordinances, and the more I joined in them, the more profitable I found them. Once it was my lot to serve a very bad family; but God raised me a friend in Isabella, whose timely counsel and example preserved me from the temptations with which I was surrounded. These are proofs, and I could mention other's of God's tender care and protec-

tion: he has never failed me in any strait, since I began to seek him. Oh! pray for the direction of his Spirit; give him your heart, and he will not forsake you.'

Travis was silent; his heart ached, as he watched beside his dying wife; but her words produced no great impression on his mind. How little do they know of the character of the human heart, who imagine that outward circumstances can of themselves effect its renewal. Saul could feel softened by the generosity of David, while his heart remained at enmity with God. (1 Samuel xxvi. 21.) Successive instances of worldly sorrow are afforded in the persons of Ahab and Judas. (1 Kings xxi. 27. Matt. xxvii. 3.) We have indeed the inspired promise, that *they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.* (Psalm cxxvi. 5.) But the glory of its fulfilment, can be realised by those alone who have cast their burden on the Lord.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOT IS CAST INTO THE LAP; BUT THE WHOLE DISPOSING THEREOF IS OF THE LORD. —Prov. xvi. 33.

THE close of the year was at hand. Successive snow-showers had clothed the hills with a robe of dazzling whiteness, and the little brook was become a solid sheet of ice. Hoar frost covered the shrubs, and weighed down the slender branches of the trees, and sparkled cheerfully in the sunshine. To the admirer of nature, winter has its peculiar beauty. Even when it partakes of the character of gloom and desolation, and suggests melancholy associations, there is much to invite useful meditation.

The bible is full of allusions to the

phenomena of external nature, and the observant Christian will constantly recall them to his mind; when the sunshine cheers him, when rain and dew nourish the earth, and storms descend to purify the atmosphere, or otherwise perform the will of him who sends them. Poor Travis, however, thought of none of these things. Christmas he had been accustomed to regard only as a period of feasting and merry-making, and no ideas of a sacred nature were associated with this season in his mind. Domestic trouble unfitted him at this time for the company of his usual companions; and cast as it were upon himself, he experienced all the bitterness of unsanctified affliction.

On New-year's eve, he left the house to try to divert his mind from the distressing scene within. He had not the heart to go as usual to the public house to drown care, and he vainly sought an in-

terest in any passing occurrence. The moon shed her silvery light on the street, which was thronged with people moving in all directions. In one corner were collected a group of school-boys intent on their marbles, and eagerly protecting their little ring against the unwary passenger. Not many paces distant a younger set were throwing snow-balls at a mark; some of which by chance or design would occasionally cover some unlucky person with a shower of cold fragments, to the great joy of the little group.

On the opposite side, a band of singers were going their rounds with appropriate carols, and at the turn of an alley in another direction a number of persons was thronging the entrance of a Wesleyan Chapel. Travis could not be said to be held by any bond of union to christians in general, or to any religious community in

particular:—On the present occasion, he entered the Chapel more from a feeling of loneliness and dejection, than devotion. He sought, in fact, merely to divert his thoughts by a new scene. Service had already commenced. The assembly was numerous, and the leader of their devotions was setting before them the portrait of one who lives without God in the world. He painted forcibly the false peace of a carnal mind, and, in an affecting address to the congregation, reminded them that, as the last hour and minute of the past year was at hand, so might eternity ere long close upon them and fix for ever the destiny of their immortal souls. Travis was at first an idle hearer, but by degrees he became interested. Every word seemed to apply to himself, and it appeared as if his own course of life was the subject of the discourse. He almost believed that he was

a marked man, and shrunk as much as possible from the preacher's eye; but still the words seemed to follow him, and that as plainly as if the united voices of the congregation had exclaimed, *Thou art the man.* Oh! how wonderfully doth *God devise means that his banished be not expelled from him.* (2 Sam. xiv. 14.) Travis felt, for the first time, that he had indeed lived a life of habitual and deliberate sin; and that he now stood in the position of a convicted and a condemned criminal at the bar of an all-seeing judge. So many iniquitous acts of his past life rushed at once upon his mind, that he felt as one completely overpowered, and though much was said to encourage the spiritually sick to come to the Physician of souls in humble reliance on his grace, Travis heard not a syllable more of all that was uttered.

When he left the Chapel he hurried

home in a state of anguish not to be described. His mind was only faintly enlightened; he now indeed felt convinced of the corruption of his own heart, a truth which all must feel before they can rightly receive or apply the saving truth of the Gospel to their souls. But he viewed this doctrine apart from the blood of atonement, and without any reference to the gracious dealings of God with his fallen creatures. As he was silent on the subject of his attendance at the Chapel, no one suspected the real state of his mind, and his feelings were alone evident to the searcher of hearts, unto whom *all things are manifest*. Martha only survived this incident a few days. On the morning that preceded her death she had received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the expression of peace and hope which brightened her faded features seemed a fore-taste of the heavenly rest

to which she was rapidly hastening. A few hours afterwards, she called her husband to her bedside. His feelings were strongly excited as he approached, and clasped her wasted hand in his. Raising her eyes towards heaven, she prayed fervently for some moments, and then drawing from beneath her pillow the Bible, which for some years had been her daily study, she placed it in his hands, and faintly and affectionately besought him to accept it as her last gift. Having uttered a few more words expressive of her happy conviction of God's mercy, she quietly fell asleep in Jesus.

We shall not trace the distressing scenes which immediately ensued on the departure of this happy spirit. It is sufficient to observe that Travis sorrowed as one without hope. He had not as yet learned to pray, and knew nothing of the Holy Spirit. He read his Bible for His wife's

sake, but it was as a sealed book; and tormented by the retrospect of his past life, and the consciousness of sin, he became every day more hopelessly wretched.

The weather having assumed a more settled aspect, Travis resumed his berth in the little fishing-boat where he was regularly employed. One of his wife's relations took charge of the house, and a small weekly allowance which he received from the Parish, added to the produce of his own exertions, enabled him to provide for the maintenance of his six motherless children. Isabella was kind in offering any assistance in her power, and Travis felt it. He was a man of strong natural feelings and hasty judgment, and in proportion as he now became awakened to a sense of his spiritual condition, he imagined himself farther removed from any intercourse with persons advanced in a

life of Godliness. He was as yet ignorant of the value of a Christian friend, and had to learn that Charity and sympathy are never so truly met with, as in the decided followers of Christ. That Travis had a friend in Isabella the following little occurrence is a proof. One day a neighbour in a spirit of idle curiosity and evil speaking too often indulged in by the thoughtless of all classes, observed to Isabella, 'Alfred seems desperately cast down, more so than one could have supposed, if all that I have heard folks say be true.'

'He is much to be pitied, poor man,' returned Isabella, "he has sustained a heavy loss, and I believe him to feel it very deeply.'

'Ah! he feels it now, I dare say. It often happens that we do not value our blessings till we lose them. To be sure I have heard it said that they did not lead

a very happy life together, but you can tell, as you have seen them.'

'I saw a great deal of the family during my poor friend's illness, Mrs. Chapman,' said Isabella,—'enough to give me a friendly interest in those she has left behind.'

'Oh! well, that is very natural, and a good thing that the children should have such a friend to look after them. I saw Alfred with the young one in his arms just now, and I stopped to speak to him, but he answered with such a sad countenance as I never beheld. After all, I fear, his sorrow has had no good effect upon him, for it appears to me that his heart is as proud as ever.'

'Of that, Mrs. Chapman,' replied Isabella, 'it surely becomes neither you nor me to judge. God alone can discern the thoughts of the heart, and where we assume an office to which we are not called,

we do it to the neglect of our own duties. We must not judge our brother, since *we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,'* (Rom. xiv. 10.)

Mrs. Chapman felt somewhat disappointed that she had not added something to her stock of scandal, but feeling pretty sure that she would gain no information from Isabella, she took her leave, and immediately forgot her pretended interest in Alfred Travis.

CHAPTER V.

I HAVE PLANTED, APOLLOS WATERED, BUT GOD GAVE THE INCREASE.—1 Cor. iii. 6.

AN interval of three months had brought some changes in the neighbourhood. Mr. Brook had left the parish to reside on another living, and Isabella, having lost her father, was hired by her former master and mistress, and followed them to their new abode.

Travis remained desponding and irresolute; the more he reviewed his past life, the more he was condemned in his own eyes, and the more convinced that he deserved the judgment of an offended God. There were times when a ray of hope would reach his mind as he thought

upon his wife's words: that there was a way of salvation open for the greatest sinners, if they would earnestly pray for it. He also felt a growing desire to obtain clearer knowledge of these things, and sleep often fled from his pillow in considering how he should best set about it. Since the death of his wife, he had never opened his heart to a single creature, and being of a shy and distant disposition with all, except his immediate associates, he felt that any effort to obtain assistance now would be doubly difficult. By his former companions, he was repeatedly promised a cure for his griefs, if he would join them at the public house; but he shrunk from the scenes he had so often witnessed there, and he felt as though he would rather drag on his present miserable existence than again seek to banish care in the soul-destroying cup. One evening when the little ones

were fast asleep in bed, their unhappy father sat alone, absorbed in melancholy reflections; resting his head on his hand, he revolved within himself every possible method for the attainment of a more tranquil mind, and in his solitude gave free course to the tears he had all day repressed. The last glimmering embers of the fire at length refused their light, and Travis retired to bed, but not to rest; his mind was too anxious to allow him to sleep; and the dawn of another sabbath found him resolved to adopt a measure which he thought would afford him what he so much desired.

At the distance of a few miles from the town where Travis resided, there was a parish which, for many years, had been blessed with the ministry of a truly devoted and experienced servant of Christ. To this clergyman he resolved to make his case known, with the especial view of

relieving his mind upon one subject. He had been considerably impressed with the peace of mind which was shed over the last hours of his wife, and particularly with the great comfort which she had derived from partaking of the emblems of the body and blood of her Saviour. Alfred's ideas on the subject of this Holy Sacrament were confused and superstitious. He ignorantly imagined that some benefit was to be derived from the mere receiving of the ordinance; and from its being usually administered to individuals on their dying bed, he looked upon it, in some sort, as a passport to heaven. It was not, however, without some misgiving that he thought of becoming a communicant himself; yet this was uppermost in his mind, and it would be difficult to record a stronger proof of his utter ignorance of every thing relating to religion. The habitual indifference of years to the

commemoration of the Lord's Supper had given way to a vague notion that it might tend, even in his present state of spiritual darkness, to bring peace to his soul.

It was Easter Sunday, and the sound of church bells, in various directions, was wafted on the soft air, as Travis prepared with an aching heart to walk to the little village of ****. He would fain have gone alone, but his two elder children besought him so earnestly to let them accompany him part of the way, that he yielded to their entreaties. The day was of that beautiful description which is often experienced at the first break of spring. The birds were singing merrily, and every thing in nature seemed to speak of mercy and hope. Sometimes when the heart is softened it is more alive to these impressions ; but, in the present instance, a dark and gloomy day would have been more in unison with the feelings of our

poor fisherman; not so his children, whose little hearts and tongues exulted every moment in some scene or other their country ramble unfolded.

The trees had scarcely put forth their leaves; but the banks were green with fresh springing grass, and the wood sorrel and anemone were beginning to show their delicately penciled flowers. Little Charles had climbed a hedge-row to gather some of the downy blossoms of the sallow, when he discovered the green sheath of the plant which country children know by the name of lords and ladies, and he eagerly pointed out this new prize to his brother.

'See, John,' he exclaimed, 'here is the plant which bears those beautiful scarlet berries in the hop season. Do you not remember when we were working last year in these grounds, that mother set you to watch little Robert, for fear

he should eat the fruit and be poisoned ?' Travis was sufficiently near to hear these words, and their association with his wife recalled to his mind the circumstances attending the day on which they had last worked together on these very grounds.

The child, seeing his father's eyes rivetted on the plant, whispered something to his brother, and both, with one accord, ran to offer him their nosegay. This little act of affection on the part of the children only added to the oppressive feelings which weighed down the mind of Travis. Kissing the little boys, he desired them to return with a neighbour who happened to be passing at the same moment, and he felt some degree of relief on being left to himself.

The parsonage house was situated near the lane that led to the church, and Travis hastened on, in hopes of obtaining an interview with Mr. Flavel before the

congregation assembled; but the chiming of the bells soon warned him that divine service was about to commence, and he entered with the rest.

I have already said that Mr. Flavel was a man who lived to promote the Redeemer's glory, and Travis felt, as he heard him speak of the corruption of the human heart, justification by faith, and the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit, that he should find a wise, humble and sympathising friend. The subject of the sermon was also well calculated for the state of the poor man's feelings, being no other than the parable of the Prodigal Son. Of the Holy Sacrament, which was afterwards administered, Travis, of course, did not partake; but he left the church more desirous than ever of arriving at a true knowledge of his own spiritual condition. The church which he that day visited is situated on a rising ground,

commanding an extensive tract of country, bounded on one side by the open sea; on the other side are downs on which are scattered cottages, and here and there, a copse or bank, gay, during the summer, with the yellow blossoms of the furze. A few tall oak-trees, near the church, form a striking feature in the landscape, and here Travis retired to be more free from observation, until the communicants should have left the church. Pacing to and fro on the ground, where the mortal remains of many ages had been committed to their kindred dust; the uncertainty of life and the value of religion presented themselves with additional force to his mind. Here, the narrow sod proclaimed the grave of an infant; there, stood the memorial of one who had attained the full term of human life; a little further, was a monumental stone bearing a tribute of affection to a beloved wife, with a few

lines descriptive of the *fruit of the Spirit.* (Gal. v. 22.

Oh, what a contrast did the words *joy and peace* seem to speak to his troubled mind, and how many acts of *meekness* and *gentleness,* fruits of the same spirit, did he associate with the memory of his own deceased wife! At length the last person had left the church, and shortly afterwards Mr. Flavel himself drew near. Travis advanced as if to address him, but his knees trembled, and his words died on his tongue. He was indeed an illustration of that beautiful scripture, *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?* (Prov. xviii. 14.)

Mr. Flavel regarded him attentively; he saw, in the man before him, a hale-looking person in the prime of life, whose countenance told of severe mental suffering, and the black crape round his hat

indicated some domestic bereavement. The practised eye of the good clergyman recognized something more in Travis's countenance than the mere bitterness of ordinary grief. He hastened therefore to address him; and, in a tone of sympathy, asked if he had sustained any heavy affliction.

The kindness of Mr. Flavel's manner went at once to the heart of Travis, and he replied, 'You speak very feelingly, sir, but I am altogether unworthy of your kindness. My afflictions have been indeed very heavy, but my sins are still heavier.'

'Carry this spirit of humility to the cross,' said the good minister, with devout energy; 'thank God that he has awakened you to a sense of your condition, and take it as an encouragement to flee to him who came to call sinners to repentance.'

'I have no right knowledge of my Saviour, I fear,' returned the poor man, with a deep sigh. 'I have indeed beheld the blessed effects of his Spirit,' he continued, wiping the tears from his eyes as he spoke, 'I have seen peace on a death-bed, but I fear I shall never feel it myself.'

'Do you desire to feel it,' demanded Mr. Flavel, with affectionate seriousness.

'Do I desire it, sir? Yes, I think I can say in sincerity that I have prayed and wept, because I thought that my prayers were in vain.'

'I see enough of you, my friend, to feel sure that your prayers have not been in vain. The Bible tells us that *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them*

which are exercised thereby. (Heb. xii. 11.) All fruit must have time for ripening. God has judged fit to teach you in the school of affliction, and his lessons, if received with submission and prayer, will bring you step by step to the one *fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.*' (Zech. xiii. 1.)

'I feel that I have much to learn,' returned Travis. I am very ignorant, sir, in all matters relating to the soul.'

'Nicodemus, though a master in Israel, was ignorant of one of the chief spiritual truths,' returned Mr. Flavel, 'yet see how kindly our Saviour conversed with him. Betake yourself to Christ with the same desire for instruction; express to him your wishes in earnest prayer, and he will give you the light of his Spirit. Do not waste the precious time which God gives you for repentance; but cast your burden before

your Redeemer at once; resolve to renounce all that is displeasing to him, and in proportion as you endeavour to act up to the light you have received, will be your increase in scriptural knowledge.'

I cannot dwell longer on the conversation which further passed between Travis and this good man; the effect, however, upon the former, was not long in being displayed, as the reader will see in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

I DO REMEMBER MY FAULTS THIS DAY.—Gen. xli. 9.

TRAVIS found his mind greatly relieved by his interview with Mr. Flavel. He was now impressed with just views of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, and with feelings he had never before experienced, he opened the Bible on his return, and carefully marked the passages to which Mr. Flavel had referred in his conversation. He engaged in this work with a sincere prayer that the Almighty would open his eyes and confirm his faith; and for the first time since the death of his wife, he laid his head on his

pillow in a frame of mind not utterly hopeless.

The following day he embarked on a fishing-voyage. The wind was fair at the time of his departure, and the skies seemed to promise the fairest weather; but how little do we know what a day may bring forth! The most experienced seaman is often overtaken by the most unforeseen storms; and happy is he who in the midst of dangers rests securely on the anchor of the soul, (Heb. vi. 19.) The little bark, manned by Travis and his companions, was driven by contrary winds much further than was intended; and after beating about for several days, put in on the succeeding Sabbath at B——. It is a pleasing fact, that in some fishing towns the Lord's day is observed in the most exemplary manner. Many ship-owners abstain from unloading their vessels on that day, and their

good example has extended itself, in some cases, to the suspension of shrimping and of going to sea on the part of the fishermen. The inhabitants of the town where Travis resided made no distinction of this kind, and the force of habit seemed to have rendered them insensible to the wickedness of their conduct in this respect. Travis was thus accustomed, like his neighbours, to carry his daily occupation into the Sabbath without compunction; if the wind served, he would as soon go to sea on that day as any other; and indeed it never had occurred to him that in this, and many other similar instances, he was habitually disobeying one of God's commandments.

On arriving at B——, our fishermen had several leisure hours before them, and as the church bell was sending forth its summons to afternoon service, Travis felt disposed to attend it. He hesitated a

little, on account of his dress; but happily his better feelings prevailed, and having laid aside his huge sea-boots, and rendered his appearance as decent as possible, he repaired to the house of God. There the beautiful Liturgy of our church solemnized his already softened feelings, and he bore his part with a spirit of devotion he had never before experienced. In the communion-service, the fourth commandment came with power to his mind, and he saw and confessed in his heart, that he had long been a Sabbath-breaker. There is an anecdote on record, of a pickpocket, who, on entering a place of worship for the purpose of theft, was deterred by seeing the eighth commandment exhibited in large characters opposite the place where he stood. In like manner the hearing of the fourth commandment, on the present occasion, was the means of bringing conviction to

the heart of Travis. The very circumstance of his being at B—— was the unforeseen result of a breach of that commandment. Like Jonah, he had been overtaken by a storm, in the midst of an act of disobedience; and though he had thus far been mercifully dealt with, who could tell that the sentence pronounced against the unfruitful tree (Luke xiii. 7.) might not be already issued against him! He felt also how often he had called upon God with his lips, when his heart had been far from him. Under a humbling sense of sin and utter unworthiness, he hurried down to his boat at the conclusion of the service, where, on his knees, he poured forth his soul in earnest prayer, that he might be strengthened to devote the rest of his days to the service of God. To describe his feelings would be impossible. They who have long lived a life of sin, and be-

held it at length in its true colours, know that the misery, remorse, and self-abasement of newly-awakened conviction *cannot* be described.

Early on the ensuing morning our fishermen set sail from B***; every indication of stormy weather had ceased. By this time Travis was more composed, and as the boat was pushed from the shore, amidst the sound of many voices, he looked again and again on the place he was leaving, with grateful interest; and as the wind bore him rapidly over the waves, his eye continued to rest on the church, until it disappeared from his view. In the course of the day he took occasion to let his companions know his change of views, in regard to the Lord's day. One of the men let his pipe fall with astonishment, that Travis should see any reason to prevent a fisherman going to sea on a Sunday, if it suited

him—another turned all that he had spoken into ridicule, while Wilson, an elderly man and the master of the boat, declared in very angry language that if Alfred chose to spend his Sabbaths on shore, he might remain there altogether, for *he* would have none of his services on other days. This seemed a bad beginning, and poor Travis could ill control his feelings of irritation. His companions quickly perceived it, and as none of them possessed the Christian sympathy which seeks, by soft answers, to turn away wrath, they of one accord increased their persecutions ten-fold, and scarcely left him a moments' rest during the remainder of the voyage. It is often more difficult to endure ridicule than direct opposition, and so Travis found it. He could withstand the ill-humoured invectives of Wilson with tolerable firmness, but the jest and taunts of the others were infinitely more trying, and he could

almost have jumped overboard to escape them. They landed, however, at last, and Travis rejoiced in the idea that he should, at least, enjoy some hours of quietness. His drooping spirits revived with the smiles of his children; but it was only for a short interval. On the following morning every boat was again put in motion, and he was roused from a sound slumber by the surly voice of Wilson, beneath his window. He rose directly and answered him; Wilson then asked in the same gruff manner, whether he intended to go with him to sea or not. Travis walked down stairs, and opening the door requested Wilson to enter, and hear what he had to say. Wilson acceded, and Travis assured him of his readiness to go to sea, provided he would respect his resolution to keep the Sabbath. He was proceeding to urge his willingness to work early and late on

other days, when Wilson cut him short, observing that he had no idea of any man in his boat refusing to work all days alike, if his master wished it; and that he was not to expect any future employment from him. With these words he left the house. Travis felt inclined to be angry, but his heart softened as he reflected on the gracious promises of God to those who suffer for righteousness' sake. He received, at this time, a parish allowance of four shillings a week, and though this was little, when the helpless state of his family was considered, he encouraged himself with the hope that, as the fine season was approaching, he should probably meet with further means of support. '*Better*,' thought he, '*is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right*. (Prov. xvi. 8.) It is far better to lose my place than the blessing of heaven.'

CHAPTER VII.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.—Matt. vi. 10.

A FEW weeks after this event, as Travis was lingering on the sea-shore, he was addressed in the following manner, by Mr. Megson, the overseer of the parish.

'Pray what is your business now, sir? and how is it that you stand idling here, when every boat is under weigh?'

'I have no regular berth now, sir,' said Travis, in a tone as respectful as the overseer's was insolent, 'I am waiting, in hopes that an additional hand may be wanted to unload that vessel.'

'And what is the reason you do not

find regular employment, a man with six children?'

'I wish to get steady work if I can,' said Travis, colouring deeply under a feeling of wounded pride. 'I believe I have my children's interest at heart as much as any man, sir.'

'Take care how you speak to me,' returned Megson, with a contemptuous sneer, 'I have not done with you yet—you need not send the child to fetch your weekly allowance next Monday; come yourself, and let us see whether we shall not place matters on a different footing.'

Travis was on the point of replying, when Megson turned on his heel and walked away. This scene occurred on the Friday, and the interval that elapsed before the ensuing Monday was one of much anxiety to poor Travis. There was something in the words and manner of Megson that foreboded no good, and

though conscious that he had only done what was right, he could not forget that his circumstances rendered him dependent. He rose on the morning of Monday in a state of considerable agitation; but happily for him the trials which, under Providence, had corrected his false estimate of worldly things, had also worked in him a growing desire for that spirit which can alone raise the affections above them. A voice from within seemed to whisper our Saviour's gracious invitation to the heavy-laden; and in its true spiritual application Travis offered up a heartfelt prayer, that whatever trials awaited him, he might be enabled to take up his cross, and not shrink from any duty which his profession as a Christian required. With feelings soothed by devotion, he repaired at the appointed hour to the house of the overseer, where the following dialogue took place.

'I understand,' said Megson in a sarcastic tone, 'that you are disposed to ruin the interests of your family by some wild crotchet you have taken into your head; I desire you to understand, that that will not go down with me.'

'Neither will hypocrisy please my Maker,' returned Travis; 'he sees my heart at this instant, and before him, I assure you, Sir, most solemnly, that I gave up my berth from no other reason than that which I assigned.'

'In that case, you are more fool than knave. That is the best that can be said of you;—but how am I to believe you? You are not accustomed to be over nice in the choice of your pursuits or associates.'

'That justly weighs against me,' said Travis sorrowfully; 'I am conscious of having spent the greater part of my life in a manner which is unlikely to produce

confidence in me now. But God is ever merciful; and if he has seen fit to awaken me to a sense of my duty, my neighbours, I trust, will not judge me uncharitably.'

'They may have some hopes of you, when they see you behave like a rational being instead of a madman; but that is just the way with those who wish to be thought better than their neighbours—they never know where to stop; as long as they keep to honesty, industry, and sobriety, it is all very well; but when a man gives out that his religion teaches him to neglect his family, it is high time that he should change it.'

This was irritating language, and the sudden flush that crimsoned the very temples of Travis proved that he felt it. —Christian principle, however, already began to shew its purifying influence. A few weeks before, he would have re-

sented any trifling vexation; but he now found that support which is promised to those who seek it. 'Indeed, Sir,' he replied after a pause, 'you mistake my principle, when you charge me with neglecting my children; only try me, Sir, I would labour night and day in any honest calling, provided it gave me liberty to make the Sabbath a day of Christian improvement.'

'As if beggars had a right to be choosers,' returned Megson scornfully; '*I* try you indeed? I put bread into your mouth after you have chosen to cast it out? Not I, truly; if you think yourself too righteous for a fisherman, you had better turn preacher.'

Travis bit his lips and coloured more deeply than ever. The struggle in his mind was great, and it was all he could do to keep the straight line under such discouragement.

'I believe a fisherman's soul requires the same care as a minister's, Sir,' he replied; 'the Gospel gives one rule for both.'

'And does not the Gospel teach a man to support his family?' demanded Megson. 'Is it not written in some part or other, that if any provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel?' (1 Tim. vi. 8.)

'Yes, Sir; but we are told by the same high authority, to *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things needful shall be added unto us*, (Matt. vi. 33.) I certainly hold it my duty to labour for my children, but not as if our temporal interests depended on the neglect of our eternal ones.'

'Do you pretend to interpret the Scriptures for your betters?' exclaimed the overseer in a rage; 'henceforth you may support your family as you please, for

not a farthing shall you have of the parish money.'

'You surely would not withhold my present allowance, Sir,' said Travis, evidently much agitated.

'I certainly will, unless you retract your sentiments,' returned Megson, striking the table violently as he spoke; 'on that condition, and on that condition only will I grant it. The matter rests entirely with yourself; but if you see your children die from starvation, remember that you had the offer of food. Do you persist in your determination?'

'It is certainly my plain duty to do so, Sir,' said Travis humbly but firmly.

Without another word, Megson flung open the door, where, beckoning to a slovenly half-grown lad, who assumed the title of his man-servant, he exclaimed, 'Tom, see this impudent fellow out of the house, and be sure you close the

street-door after him.' The boy having satisfied his curiosity, by a vacant stare at Travis, opened the door to its widest extent, and closed it with twice as much noise as was requisite, as if determined that his master should hear that he had fulfilled his orders. Nothing but a deep sense of duty could have sustained Travis throughout this brief scene. He now found himself a poorer, but a happier man than he had been during the suspense of the last few days. His was indeed a lot of extreme poverty; but as yet, he had a faint idea of the extent of its hardships. It was summer time, and the return of the hop-season in a few weeks afforded a cheering prospect of employment. Meanwhile, he strained every nerve for the honest maintenance of his family. In dry weather, he carried water for the mistress of a lodging-house, and rising early every day walked a dis-

tance of several miles into the country in order to procure faggots and water-cresses for sale. These his eldest boy carried from house to house, while the younger children collected bones in the streets and markets, which they sold at four-pence a bushel for manure. All this afforded a very scanty subsistance for a family of seven persons; yet poor Travis contrived, with one thing or another, to pay his way. His heaviest trials, which were not yet come, will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU THAT IN ME YE MIGHT HAVE PEACE. IN THE WORLD YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION; BUT BE OF GOOD CHEER, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD.—John xvi. 33.

As the year advanced, Travis daily experienced increasing care and trial. The profits of the hop-season barely sufficed for the maintenance of his family during the autumnal months; and when they failed, he found himself abridged of every domestic comfort, and that too at the commencement of the most inclement season of the year. In vain did he solicit employment from some of his more wealthy neighbours. He was repulsed with ridicule and reproach; his sea-faring com-

panions telling him plainly, that if he would live with them, he must live like them. Had he appealed at this period, to the proper authorities, there is no doubt, he would have received assistance. But some allowance is due to a sensitive and reserved temper, which shrank from a repetition of unavailing efforts, and with feelings yet smarting from the recent imputations cast upon him, it is also not surprising, that from this time, Travis avoided much intercourse with his neighbours.

In the course of a few weeks, meagre diet and deficient clothing began to affect the health of his children, especially the youngest, whose ruddy cheeks and playful spirits, had given place to the sickly hue and languid movements of debility. The father watched his child with agonized feelings: he saw it daily wasting away, without having power to obtain

the simple food which alone was necessary to arrest the progress of disease. In the vague hope that medicine might do something, he determined to carry it to a physician, who at stated hours gave his advice freely to the poor. Having wrapped his little one in the warmest clothes he had, he carried it to the doctor, and explained the object of his visit.

'You need not despair of your child's recovery,' observed the physician after calmly examining the case. 'In its present weak state, indeed any slight increase of illness might prove fatal; but if nothing unforeseen occur, its strength will be restored by the medicines I shall recommend; and above all by a due attention to warmth and nourishment.' Thus saying, he committed a few directions to paper, and delivered them to Travis assuring him at the same time that a plentiful supply of nourishing food

was more essential than medicine. Alas! thought poor Travis, How shall I procure it? and forgetting his situation he remained standing with the child in his arms overpowered with his reflections. The physician, however, rung the bell, and desiring the next person to enter, he recollected himself, and respectfully expressing his thanks, left the room. On his way home he endeavoured to revive his spirits, by a walk on the beach. The scene it presented, was one of cheerful interest to those whose hearts were not too sad to enjoy it. Immediately before him was the bay, sheltered on either side by high rocky cliffs; the sea occupied the centre of the prospect, reflecting with countless shades the varied colours of the sky—occasionally overcast. Here and there a trading vessel appeared in the distance, and nearer the shore a few little fishing-boats were seen, one moment

plunging into the hollow, and the next mounting lightly on the summit of the wave. A number of fishermen were busy mending their tackle, and spreading out their nets to dry, and about a dozen children were assembled round a blazing fire in the market; some for the sake of the glowing embers, and others to take a peep at the contents of a smoking caldron in which oil was extracted from the bones and refuse of fish. Travis stood alone and unheeded for some time; but he soon perceived that he afforded a subject of conversation to a party of ladies who were standing at the entrance of a lane inhabited by some very poor families. A remark made by one of them led him to infer that they were engaged in some charitable distribution, and a ray of hope for an instant entered into his heart, as he heard one of them exclaim, 'Poor man, only see that miserable child in his

arms!' Her companion, gently pulling her by the sleeve, made some reply, and they proceeded together to a fish stall, where Wilson, and some more of Travis's old comrades were sitting very leisurely smoking their pipes. The ladies addressed the former in a low tone of voice, and at the same time looked at Travis. The latter could not distinguish their question; but he overheard Wilson reply, 'An object of charity, ladies? I will tell you the sort: he is one of those who might work if he would; but he has quarrelled with his own bread and butter, as the saying goes, and then wants others to maintain him.' The ladies thanked him for his information, and having apparently reported it to the rest of the party, they resumed their walk in another direction, and no one seemed to think again of poor Travis.

The hopes of the latter were completely

overthrown by this last adventure, and he bent his steps homewards, in a state of mind almost approaching to despair. Within a few yards of his house, he was obliged to step aside, to give place to a baker, who was coming out of a shop, bearing a large tray of cakes on his head. The child had slumbered in its father's arms during the greater part of the walk; but at this instant it awoke, and, with a longing eye, stretched forth its little wasted hands towards the tempting board. Heart-rending as was the denial, Travis was hurrying on, under the consciousness that he barely possessed a penny for the common necessaries of life. The child made no resistance, but a tear stole down its pallid cheek, which the kind-hearted baker observing, he took a cake from the tray, and gave it to the child, saying, 'Poor little dear, you look as if you wanted one.'

We all love sympathy, and all in some way need it, and the peculiar blessedness that accompanies its smallest acts, distinctly marks it for a plant of heavenly growth. Travis was a stranger to the baker, whose kindness sprung from no other motive than Christian feeling for the suffering infant. It was the work of a moment; but it seemed a cordial to the heart of the afflicted father. He made an effort to express his thanks, but could only articulate, with a look of gratitude, 'God Almighty bless you!'

Travis reached home just in time for a trial of temper: the children had been playing carelessly, in the absence of the woman who usually looked after them, and the first sounds which greeted their father were those of lamentation.

'Oh, father,' exclaimed two or three voices, as his step was heard on the

threshold, ' we have had such a misfortune; we have broken the large pitcher, and spilled all the milk that you brought for dinner and supper.'

It often happens that accidents from thoughtlessness meet with heavier punishment than wilful sin; but where such is the case, the parent, or master and mistress, will do well to measure the offence by a more scriptural standard. There was a time when Travis would have overlooked a falsehood or profane expression much sooner than such an accident; but these days were gone by. The elder children explained the affair, while the younger ones stood in silent dismay, expecting nothing less than some punishment. A cloud passed over their father's brow, when he saw what had happened; but refraining from all passionate exclamations, he calmly reproved the little offenders for their carelessness,

and endeavoured within himself to make the best of the accident.

Having finished his scanty meal, he resolved to sell a few articles of furniture, in order to raise money for present expenses. He possessed little that could be dispensed with, but after reflecting that a month's rent would in a day or two become due, he felt disposed to make any honest sacrifice that would enable him to meet it. After some little consideration, he fixed upon a bed, reserving his nets and fishing-tackle until the last extremity, in the faint hope that a time might yet come when he should be permitted to use them. One of the bleakest nights in December followed the sale of the bed; the children occupied the ragged bedding that remained, and Travis endeavoured to pass the night on some straw at the farther end of the room. Accustomed to brave all seasons,

there was a period when he would have smiled at the midnight blast; but the glow of health and spirits no longer enlivened his frame; and though a brave and resolute man, he inwardly shuddered at the sound of the storm. No refreshing sleep came to soothe his troubles, as he lay shivering through the night, hearing the hail patter sharply against the window, and the rattling of the wind in the chimney.

The sick child appeared to feel the effects of the piercing air. It slept at intervals, then awoke, coughed, and cried itself again to sleep. Once, in the midst of a restless dream, it called 'Father!' on which the parent started up, and flew to the pallet where the little sufferer lay. The latter was unconscious of what had passed, but, at the sound of its father's voice, it opened its eyes, and stretched forth its arms. Travis hastily

pulled off the thick jacket he was wearing as the best defence against the cold, and wrapping it round the child, he revived the dying fire with a fresh handful of fuel, and sat beside it with the little one on his knee, until it dropped asleep. In the solitude of the night, Travis began to consider whether he strictly fulfilled his duty as a parent. He beheld one of his family sinking, and the rest reduced to extreme poverty, and he began to doubt within himself whether he might not be pushing a good principle unnecessarily far. 'Alas!' he thought, 'were I alone the sufferer, I could bear it. I seem to stand alone in my sentiments; and if it be true, as many urge, that the peculiar employment of a fisherman exempts him from a strict fulfilment of the fourth commandment, surely six motherless children may plead some indulgence.' As this idea presented itself to his mind,

he took the Bible from the shelf, and opening it at random, his eye rested on the thirty-fourth Psalm, which he read. The sixth, eighteenth, and nineteenth verses especially engaged his attention. He remembered that Joseph was afflicted for conscience' sake; so was Daniel; yet both sought the Lord, and he delivered them from all their fears. In the prison as well as the lions' den, the Lord was nigh, and his Holy Spirit rendered his faithful servants triumphant over temptation. Animated by this last reflection, Travis felt his faith strengthened, and, inwardly praying for divine grace and consolation, he resolved to wait upon God in the use of his prescribed means, with a humble hope that he would sooner or later bless the issue. At this moment he turned towards the window; the shades of night were slowly dispersing, and the violence of the storm was over. The

sea was still turbid and threatening, and the clouds lowering; but one bright star shone in the distance with a steady lustre, and the sight of it reminded Travis of two striking scriptural figures of the gospel light (Rev. xxii. 16. Isaiah lx. 2.) That star, he thought, will soon be followed by sunrise. God grant that in his own good time the Sun of Righteousness may shine on me with healing in his wings. (Mal. iv. 2.)

CHAPTER IX.

NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS, FERVENT IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD.—Rom. xii. 11.

PAINFUL as was the task, Travis had determined that no feelings of false shame should deter him from seeking relief from his necessities in any way consistent with his duty to God. A proper kind of independence rendered him above the meanness of asking for money which his industry could supply, and nothing less than the destitute state of his family could have reconciled him to his present determination. 'It is better,' thought he, 'to beg than steal, and as I am willing to labour for all that I ask, I trust

that some one may be kind enough to assist me.'

As soon as breakfast was over, he went for the necessary medicines for his child. The druggist, who was a highly respectable person, received the order with his usual civility, and begging Travis to be seated, until the things he wanted were ready, he asked him, in a kind manner, how long his child had been ill. This opened the heart of Travis, who immediately entered into a faithful detail of all that his little one had suffered. The druggist listened to him with interest, and, on making some further inquiry, Travis was induced to ask if he could direct him to any humane person, who would take his circumstances into consideration.

'If you have not already applied to the district-visiting society,' returned Mr. Perkins, I would advise you by all

means to do so. It is conducted by many active and benevolent persons, who make the relief of the sick one of their especial objects.'

This idea had never occurred to Travis; for as yet district-visiting was in its infancy. Many blessings, spiritual and temporal, have dawned on the scene of my history since that period, and I have reason to believe that many a grateful heart appreciates them. Travis thanked Mr. Perkins for his advice, and the medicines being completed, he asked what he was to pay for them.

'Half-a-crown, if you please,' said the druggist.

Travis immediately put his hand into his pocket, with the satisfaction of one who would rather 'go to bed supperless, than rise in debt.'

'Do not hurry yourself,' said Mr. Perkins, 'there are many expenses attend-

ing illness, you had better pay me by small sums, as it suits your convenience.'

Travis felt the kindness of the offer, but his honest spirit would not permit him to accept it. In the fulness of his heart, he had insensibly disclosed the whole of his tale of misery, and he could not bear to think that this should be attributed to other motives.

'You are very kind, sir,' said he, gratefully, 'but I would rather pay when I have the power.'

'Well do as you please,' said the druggist, who guessed what was passing in his customer's mind, 'I would trust you most willingly.'

Travis acknowledged this expression of confidence by a look of gratitude, and a faint smile enlivened his care-worn features, as he replied, 'Thank you, sir, there is an old saying, that it is not so painful to an honest man to want money

as to be owing it, and I hope I can say that of myself.'

'A jewel under a thread-bare coat,' thought Mr. Perkins, as he closed the door after his conscientious customer.

Travis next proceeded to the house of Mr. Ferguson, a respectable tradesman, who was described as an active member of the visiting committee. He was in the midst of unpacking a bale of goods, when one of his apprentices came to say that a man of the name of Travis wished to speak with him. 'I know no one of that name,' said the tradesman, rather impatient at the interruption. 'I have my hands full at present; ask him if his business will not keep until to-morrow.'

'He wants some assistance from the Visiting Society, I believe, sir,' returned the apprentice, 'he looks distressed, and said something about an illness in his family.'

The benevolent shopkeeper sprung hastily over the counter on hearing that the appeal was one of distress. 'Mind these goods,' said he, to one of his young men, and I will return as soon as I can.' Mr. Ferguson then proceeded to inquire into the circumstances that led Travis to apply to him. As a religious man himself, he owned the obligations which the Sabbath impresses upon the observance of all true Christians, and he respected the conduct that adhered to them. His inquiries were made with feeling and good sense; 'if we would know a man,' says the proverb, 'we must lay his words and his actions together,' and in no case is this more applicable than in the proper distribution of bounty. Mr. Ferguson felt disposed to believe that our friend's words would stand this test; but he acted on the strength of the precept, and dismissed Travis with the promise of early aid, in

the event of further inquiries proving satisfactory. He was as good as his word, every thing confirmed the poor man's statement, and his case met with prompt and humane attention. Proper nourishment was afforded for the sick child, and an occasional grant of coals and other necessaries enabled the family to struggle over the worst period of the winter. One evening when they were just sitting down to dinner, the door was softly opened, by a person who stood for some moments unperceived. A scanty supply of bread and tea was spread on the table, and the children stood around it, with their eyes directed towards their father, who was just proceeding to ask the divine blessing upon their approaching meal. The stranger, who was a coal-merchant, of the name of Owen, waited until the short, but fervent prayer was over, and then entered.

'Your name is Travis, I think,' said Mr. Owen, 'Are you the same man, who formerly went to sea with Michael Wilson?'

'Yes, sir: I left him about a twelvemonth since.'

'Have you any prospect of going to sea again?' demanded Mr. Owen.

'None, sir,' as far as I can judge,' said Travis, slightly colouring.

'Well,' resumed the coal-merchant, 'I understand, from Mr. Ferguson, that you are willing to work as hard as any of them, for six days in the week, and I have a mind to try you—I want a stout and steady hand in my coal-yard; do you think yourself equal to the business?'

The sallow paleness of the poor man's face told plainly of impaired strength, though his spirit remained as active as ever. His eyes sparkled with animation as he replied, 'I shall indeed be glad to

serve you, sir, and I trust the Lord will enable me to do it faithfully. I am not so strong as I used to be, but what I want in strength, it will be my endeavour to make up in industry.'

Mr. Owen was pleased, and looking at the children, added, 'If you like to bring your eldest boy with you, I may probably find employment for him also. I shall expect you to begin next Monday. In point of wages, you will fare like my other men; as for your son, I must see first what he is worth.'

Mr. Owen then withdrew. His departure was a signal for many hearty expressions of joy, on the part of the children. Their light and buoyant spirits relieved themselves in all kinds of innocent merriment, while their not less happy parent, in a voice almost inarticulate, from emotion, thanked God for this unexpected instance of favour.

On the following week he commenced his new employment. His strict integrity gradually obtained his master's confidence, and many of his fellow-workmen, who were disposed to undervalue his exertions, because they could not understand them, insensibly learnt to respect him.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN THE ENEMY SHALL COME IN LIKE A FLOOD THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM.—Isaiah lix. 19.

AFFAIRS proceeded well with Travis for several months. With the assistance of his son, he earned, upon an average, seventeen shillings a-week, which enabled him to pay his debts, and send his children to school. The health of the youngest improved rapidly; and the prospects of the family seemed highly favourable. Travis, however, had experienced too much of the bitterness of adversity, to forget the uncertainty of the things of this life. He was, besides, in some trouble about his spiritual condition. He remembered the false security

in which he once lived, and his dread of falling back into a similar state of mind made him run almost into the opposite extreme.

A long time had elapsed since his interview with Mr. Flavel, and he had not yet taken his place at the Lord's table. Trembling as he perceived how intimately sin was mixed up with his best efforts, he either lamented that his faith was not more ardent, or was in danger of doubting whether it was a living faith at all; and he sometimes forgot that though all the Christian graces proceed from God, yet they must be sought by the various appointed means, of which none are to be neglected. The longer he remained in this unsettled state of mind, the more he became a prey to doubt and discomfort, until, at length, he again determined to seek the counsel of Mr. Flavel. It is much to be regretted, how often false shame in timid persons,

overcomes a sincere desire for spiritual instruction. In the present instance, it caused Travis much causeless uneasiness. He found, when he called on Mr. Flavel, that the latter had left home on account of impaired health, and thus disappointed, passed several weeks, before he could make up his mind to apply to any one else. His own conviction, at last, that it could not be right to neglect such an important ordinance as the Lord's Supper, induced him to take courage, and speak to one of the ministers of his own parish. It is scarcely necessary to say that he was kindly received, and his doubts and perplexities removed, so that the next month found him a humble, and joyful partaker of that ordinance which commemorates a dying Saviour's love to mankind; nor did he fail to realize thereby an increase of spiritual strength and comfort.

About this time Mr. Owen's affairs be-

came disordered in consequence of certain losses, which obliged him, in the first instance, to reduce the wages of his workmen, and after every effort to recover his credit, he became bankrupt. Here, therefore, was our friend cast upon the world. But he had made the most of his interval of prosperity. Nothing he had earned had been wasted in extravagance, and by dint of industry and carefulness, he had saved a small sum. His steady, trustworthy conduct had attracted the notice of some of his master's friends, one of whom, a boat-owner, made him the offer of a regular berth on board the best boat in the harbour, if he would lay aside his scruples, and do as the rest did on the Sabbath. Travis, however, remained firm, his faith, like gold in the furnace, had been refined rather than obscured by trial, and though the employment that would have supported his family, was

given before his face, to a man who spent his earnings in drunkenness, he received strength to say with the apostle, " I am not ashamed : for I know whom I have believed." (2 Timothy i. 12.)

In a short time Travis became again exceedingly anxious about his family. He had paid away the last shilling of his hard-earned savings, and felt the necessity of seeking a cheaper lodging. He was directed to one that sounded likely to suit his means. It consisted of two small rooms, situated in an obscure corner of a narrow alley, for which the owner demanded half-a-crown a-week. Travis pleaded poverty, and endeavoured to obtain it for sixpence less. The landlord laughed rather insolently, and told him plainly that he was not over and above anxious to have a man for a tenant who would refuse a berth at sea. He added, that if he liked to take the

lodging for two-and-sixpence, he might, on condition, that if the rent was not regularly paid, he should be turned out without warning. Travis, considerably irritated, did not trust himself to reply; but left the place, and turned his steps towards home. As he passed the beach on his way home, he found a party of fishermen on shore, preparing to dispose of their fish. The spotted plaice, the silvery whiting, and the gurnard with its bright red fins, were arranged in lots ready to be knocked down to the highest bidder. At the conclusion of the sale, Travis was recognised by a fisherman who was just preparing to depart, with a bundle of refuse-fish large enough to afford two hearty meals for a whole family.

'See, my friend,' said the latter, holding his prize before Travis, 'this comes from not being too choice in times and seasons—I would advise you to think

twice next time before you refuse a good offer. You and I were fellow-workmen in Mr. Owen's coal-yard; but when that trade failed, I turned my hand to another, you see.'

This speech occasioned laughter among the by-standers, and led many who were ignorant of the real history of Travis, to imagine that his destitution arose from his own idleness. As for Travis himself, he found it difficult to bear their taunts with patience; and the sight of abundance of food, when his children were fasting, excited feelings still more difficult to control. He felt for a time with the patriarch Jacob, *that all things were against him*, and returned home almost heart-broken. Hardly aware of the presence of his children, he kneeled down and prayed earnestly for divine direction. For some days he hesitated, whether he should close with the owner of the wretched lodging; but

necessity prevailed, and on the following week he left with a heavy heart the house where he had lived ever since his marriage. Many little troubles awaited him in his new dwelling. A room on the same floor was inhabited by a family of the name of Gill, consisting of a man and his wife and four children. Andrew Gill was an idle fellow, who had thoughtlessly taken upon himself the cares of married life, and his wife, with a little more forethought, had a terrible temper, which she exercised by incessantly reproaching her husband. Their children, as might be expected, did not contribute to promote domestic harmony. Altogether, Travis was unfortunate in his neighbours. They were besides, very poor; and not being restrained by any good principles, resorted to any method of obtaining money which presented itself. The expedient which Mrs. Gill found most profitable was that

of exciting the compassion of charitable individuals, by carrying about one of her children who was a cripple. On these occasions, she could speak with apparent feeling and humility, and had the art of adapting her address to the character of the person whose assistance she solicited, and by an odious hypocrisy succeeded in imposing upon many charitable and kind-hearted people.

CHAPTER XI.

KNOWING THAT TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE; AND PATIENCE, EXPERIENCE; AND EXPERIENCE HOPE.—Rom. v. 3, 4.

ANDREW GILL'S eldest child was distinguished from the rest of the family, by a mild and generous temper. He would give up a plaything at any time to oblige another, and the circumstance of his being just the age of Charles Travis, made the two boys rather intimate companions. Travis, who was fond of children, soon attached himself to his little neighbour; and though he often saw and lamented the want of a practical fear of God on the part of poor George, his partiality blinded him to the extent of the evil.

One day Charles seemed to be thinking very intently. He rested his head on one hand, while in the other he held an untasted bun, the gift of his friend George: Travis had watched him in silence for some minutes, and at last observed with a smile, 'What are you thinking about, Charles?'

The little boy looked at his father, and then at his own old shoes as he replied, 'I was wishing, father, that I could earn money as easily as others.'

Travis could not help laughing at the result of poor Charles's unusual silence. 'Do not fret about that, my boy,' said he good-naturedly: 'he who clothes the lilies of the field, will never neglect his children. Do you remember the words of the Psalm last Sunday; *Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*' (Psalm xxxvii. 3.)

'I should wish to do good if I could only find the right way,' returned Charles, 'but I am so very unlucky.'

'Trust to something better than luck, my dear,' said Travis, 'fortune and luck may do for heathens, and those who have nothing better to rest upon than the world; but Christians should look to God's Providence, and they have his assurance that he knows what is needful for them. But this, you know, affords no ground for remaining idle.'

'I am sure I do not wish to be idle, though I often feel vexed that I should work for nothing. I know that George Gill sometimes earns more in two days than my brother and I can make in a week. Surely there is no harm in wishing to do as well; I am not envying those who may be idle if they choose.'

'Who are they?' observed his father, smiling.

'Why rich people, you know.

'Who tells them they may be idle?—not the bible. Idle people are to be pitied whether they be rich or poor, and they are equally accountable to God for the manner in which they employ their time. There are indeed different kinds of employment. Some men work with their hands; some with their minds; and the labour of the mind is often far more fatiguing than that of the body. Perhaps you have found that out in learning a hard lesson.'

Charles smiled, for he disliked any occupation that required much thought. 'But you know, father,' he observed, 'gentlefolks are not obliged to work for the same reason that we are; if we were to sit all day with folded arms, we should starve, while they may pay others to do their work if they choose.'

'I grant you that in a worldly point of

view, their calls for exertion are less pressing; but God will nevertheless call them to account if they do not employ their time so as to promote his glory and the good of their fellow-creatures, and they cannot do that without constant labour of some kind. Remember the servant who hid his talent in the earth, (Matthew xxv. 26.) The gentry have the same spiritual privileges as ourselves, and if gifted with riches, power or knowledge above what we possess, are not these additional talents to be improved and accounted for hereafter.'

Charles looked thoughtful, and his father continued: 'I believe that the very obligation to work, which we sometimes consider a burden, ought rather to be regarded as a blessing, for it removes us further from the temptations of a life of idleness, which are very great. I believe, however, that many of our supe-

riors are very active labourers in the Lord's vineyard, using this world without abusing it, and improving their gifts to their Redeemer's service. But now tell me how George contrives to earn more than you.'

'I cannot exactly say he works for it,' returned Charles, 'but he gets a good deal by carrying his little lame brother on the public walk, and then he asks at gentlemen's houses for broken meat, tea-leaves, and such things.'

Just at this moment, Travis was called away, which put a stop to the conversation. It was late before he returned, and the ensuing morning he went out at early dawn with his shrimp-net, to try to make a living that way. He was all day absent with tolerable success; and though his limbs ached with weariness as he trudged homeward, he felt thankful in having earned enough for present sup-

port. It was one of those fine calm evenings in August, when every thing in nature seems to partake of the peace and purity of its Maker. The western sky glowed with rich tints of red and gold; and a long line of rocks, seen only at low tide, was all that broke the rippling waves. Vast numbers of sheep were scattered over the downs, and the faint tinkling of the bell annexed to the leaders of the flock, was the only sound heard for some miles. As Travis drew nearer the town, the scene changed. Uproar and confusion seemed to prevail; and men, women, and children were running together as if something unusual had happened. Travis advanced towards the throng, and having inquired what was the matter, was told, 'A child had been detected stealing bread.' At the same time several persons moved from the crowd, and Travis caught a glimpse of

the youthful culprit. His face was hid, but the heart of Travis sickened at the sight of the dress and figure which was not unlike that of his own boy. Pale with agony, he rushed forward, and beheld, not Charles, but his favourite playmate George Gill.

A Christian parent will readily enter into his feelings. The delight which he experienced on finding that the culprit was not his son, was quickly succeeded by a feeling of sadness and sympathy for the real criminal. The unhappy child had thrown himself on the ground and hid his face in his hands, till being forcibly roused from this posture he perceived Travis, and springing towards him with tears streaming down his cheeks, cried, 'Oh master Travis, only speak for me.'

'It will be of no use,' said one of the men who had the little prisoner in charge, 'we know your thievish practices, and it

is fit that they should meet with their deserts.'

'I am sorry to hear this of you,' said Travis, in a tone of deep sorrow, 'Do not add to your sin by concealing the truth.'

The wretched child made no reply; but covering his face with his hands, he sobbed as if his heart would break.

'It would be false kindness to beg him off,' remarked a baker approaching Travis, who was evidently much affected: 'he has been addicted to theft a long time, as many besides myself can testify. Scarcely a month since, he was detected stealing coals from a house where he was sent to ask for broken meat; and though the owner locked him up in the coal-hole for some hours, in hopes the punishment might be a warning to him: you see how little he has profited by it.—Yesterday, I missed half a score of buns, and sus-

pecting the thief might pay me another visit, I contrived to watch the shop more narrowly than was supposed, and just now the child was seized, in the act of carrying off a roll and some money he had taken from the till; so we are going to take him before a magistrate.'

'Do his parents know it?' said Travis in a lower tone.

'They know his propensity to pilfer, and have often punished him; but I doubt the evil lies with themselves. They expose their children to so much temptation.'

Travis felt the truth of this remark, and perceiving that, under the circumstances of the case, he would not be justified in attempting to obtain the boy's pardon, he made his way out of the crowd. As he walked home he was overtaken by a young seaman of serious habits, of the name of Chappell.

'This is a sad business,' he observed, 'and yet it is no more than might have been expected.'

'I never knew the family until I came to lodge on the same floor with them, three weeks since,' returned Travis. 'I have, however, seen enough to convince me that they are much to blame in the management of their children.'

'Though I never heard of their stealing themselves,' said Chappell, 'they encourage their children in practices [1] which lead to it, and teach them to do any thing rather than work; and who can wonder at the consequences?'

[1] I once saw this exemplified in the case of a fine tempered, intelligent boy. who acquired habits of theft, and at the age of eleven, had so offended, as to be liable to the severe penalties of the law. His ruin was clearly traced to the practice referred to in my narrative, and I record it for the warning of parents.

'That is too true,' said Travis; 'we must not only be careful in training up our children in the way they should go, but set them the example; for precept will go but a little way without it.'

'The great evil after all,' observed Chappell, is gross ignorance in regard to religion. Men of all ranks seem often to lose sight of the real nature of sin, not to speak of the natural state of their own hearts. When that is the case you cannot expect them to be very watchful against the beginnings of evil. I remember an interesting example of the effects of parental watchfulness, under God's blessing. A friend of mine, when very young, was apprenticed to a grocer at some distance from home. On returning after a while to visit his family, he brought a stick of barley sugar to his little brothers. 'My dear,' asked his mother, 'did your master give you that sugar to carry

home?' 'No, mother; but he said I might eat as much of it as I liked.' 'But did he say you might give away as much as you liked?' 'No,' said the boy, who saw at once that he had done wrong. 'My dear,' she said kindly, 'you have sinned from thoughtlessness; but recollect, from this time, that we must be faithful in little as well as in much.' The lad returned to his place: and when he next visited his home, he said, 'Mother, I thought of what you said, when I returned to my master, and I could not be easy till I had paid for the sugar by putting a half-penny into the till.' My friend is now in business for himself, and is receiving a temporal reward for uniform honesty and integrity.'

Travis and his stranger friend were mutually pleased with each other; and the former regretted after a lengthened conversation, that it was time for him to

seek his own home. The event gave rise to many serious reflections, and he trembled at the thought that his children might suffer from the bad habits of his neighbour's family. He saw the propriety of leaving his present abode; and accordingly, the following week, he removed to lodgings in the other end of the town. They were, in appearance, even more desolate than the last; but he had steady people for his nearest neighbours. He was scarcely settled when it pleased God to afflict him with a serious illness, that prevented him from contributing in any way to the support of his family. His sufferings for some weeks were great, and nothing short of the consolations of the Gospel could have sustained him. Amidst his difficulties and distresses, he seemed to realize the blessings promised to that faith which overcometh the world. (1 John v. 4.) *Tri-*

bulation had brought him nearer to his Saviour. It had worked in him *patience,* and *patience, experience,* and experience strengthened and confirmed that *hope* which is the believer's glory.

CHAPTER XII.

BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE, THAT THERE MAY BE MEAT IN MINE HOUSE, AND PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS, IF I WILL NOT OPEN YOU THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN, AND POUR YOU OUT A BLESSING, THAT THERE SHALL NOT BE ROOM ENOUGH TO RECEIVE IT.—Malachi iii. 10.

TRAVIS was often visited, during his illness, by Chappell, the young man we mentioned in a preceding chapter. Their religious sentiments corresponded, and they mutually benefitted by friendly intercourse. Some incidents common to both might probably contribute, in the first instance to an exchange of confidence; both knew sorrow, and both had been brought in the day of adversity to consider. (Eccles. viii. 14.) Their trials

were different, but overruled by the same hand; their fruits were similar, and each could look back on the cause of former bitterness, and say with David, "*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted." (Psalm cxix. 71.)

Travis received a little assistance at this time from other benevolent individuals, and his health was slowly but gradually restored. His illness, however, obliged him to give up all idea of obtaining a future livelihood by shrimping, and it appeared as if his sole prospect of support was cut off. But it was not so. A young man, who respected his principles, offered him at this time, a share in a boat on his own terms; and we may readily believe the offer was most thankfully accepted. All went well for some months, when the boat, which time had rendered old and crazy, became unfit for use, and was finally swamped. But the

same providence that had hitherto watched over Travis still sustained him, and guided him through paths he knew not, to the attainment of temporal and eternal peace. Since his intimacy with Chappell, he had lived less alone, and with more usefulness to his fellow men. In the early part of his Christian course he felt as if all his business lay at home; but increased belief brought with it more extended views, and he had now learned that *faith worketh by love*, (Gal. v. 6), and that charity or Christian love for our neighbour is the necessary evidence of a sincere love towards God. As his faith grew stronger, he became better able, to contend with the difficulties which beset him. Worldly vexations lost much of their former keenness, and the very ridicule to which he was once so sensitive, now inspired him with feelings of pity rather than anger. One evening as

he was seated among his younger children, he received a visit from a fisherman who had risen in his calling, and was now the owner of one of the best boats in the place. The latter had known Travis for some years, and though their estimate of worldly things was very different, he felt that sympathy in his former companion's circumstances, which inspired him with a wish to improve them.

'Alfred,' said he bluntly on entering the room, 'you and I were once comrades. I have a boat of my own now, with a berth at your service. How say you? Shall we be partners again?'

Travis was extremely pleased with this offer; but he had learned not to be too soon elated. 'Thank you kindly, Seaton, for the offer, but we must understand each other. If I take your service shall I be permitted to devote the Lord's-day to His service?'

'Here is what I feared,' said Seaton with vexation. 'No, Travis, I cannot promise that, but you will have many opportunities of keeping the Sabbath as you wish. The wind does not always serve on Sundays you know; you must make up your mind to an occasional work of necessity, and all will then be well.'

'God grant that I may never so deceive myself as to the real nature of sin,' returned Travis, 'as to think its occasional commission lawful. If I were detained at sea by contrary winds, I might then indeed plead necessity; or if my boat or tackle had drifted out, I should then consider it a work of necessity to recover them. But surely instances of this kind are very different from a deliberate intent to carry week-day occupations into the Sabbath, in defiance of a Divine command. Besides the observance of the Lord's day in other places, as poor and

populous as ours, clearly proves that what is pleaded as a work of necessity really is not so. Look at Scotland, not to say many fishing towns in England, where the Lord's-day is religiously observed.'

'I cannot speak of other places,' answered Seaton; 'circumstances may alter the nature of things; but I appeal to truth and common sense, when I ask you what have been the fruits of such strict self-denial on your part? Has your calling prospered, or have you been reduced from honest independence to a state of poverty beyond that of any industrious man in the town?'

This was a trying question, not unlike that of the Jews of old, (Mal. iii. 14.) But Travis had faith enough to believe that the light of the Lord's countenance might even shine upon him from behind a cloud. 'I do not deny my poverty,'

he replied; 'I have experienced many trials, and I look for more: but this I *can* say,' he added, his eye glistening with animation as he spoke, 'I would not exchange my present feelings for the false independence I once enjoyed; no, not for all the riches of the world. I called my livelihood honest, but I little reflected on the many Sabbaths of which I robbed *him* from whom I derived my all. I robbed him of his honour and glory, and that small portion of time which he bids us employ in his service. He tells us to prove him, if he will not pour out a blessing on those who serve him, and I have reason to trust his promises. (Mal. iii. 10.) I have in fact gained in peace of mind and real happiness more than I have lost in worldly goods.'

At that instant three of the elder children entered the room. The tallest had

just passed the window with two water-buckets slung across his shoulders, the next had been in the country collecting kindling sticks for sale, and the third, a little boy whose laughing eyes looked as if he had never known care, approached his father with his pinnafore filled with shreds of cotton and linen, and a half-penny in his hand which he laid on the table with expressions of delight.

'Is that your own earning, my dear,' said Travis; 'you must have worked hard to sell another pound of rags, George.' 'I was at work before breakfast,' said the little boy, 'and I hope I shall have another half-penny to bring you to-morrow. One of the servants in that row of houses saw me collecting rags, and she made me a present of all these.'

The poor man lifted the child on his knee, and kissed him; and a tear rolled down his cheek as he observed to Seaton,

"We love and help one another, you see, and *better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.*" (Prov. xv. 16.)

Seaton saw this exemplified; but like the young man in the Gospel, (Matt. xix. 22) *he went away sorrowful.* Wealth was dearer to him than eternal life. He would indeed willingly have served both God and Mammon, but if one master must be forsaken, it must be God and not Mammon.

On the following Sunday, Travis went to sit beside a sick neighbour, and on his way thither, met Chappell, who was passing the interval between divine service, in the enjoyment of a walk with his wife. Many respectable persons, released from the cares of the week, were availing themselves of the same privilege, and children of various ages, in clean and

neat attire, were crossing the street to their respective schools.

'What numbers of little ones!' said Chappell, turning to look at them, 'may parents and teachers work together to impress the word of life on their hearts. A Sunday school conducted in a Gospel spirit, seems to say for itself,—*This is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.* (Psalm cxvii. 24.)'

'Many a crown of rejoicing may be traced, under God, to Sabbath-school instruction,' returned Travis in a tone of deep feeling. 'My wife was one example, and probably one of the first-fruits in this place. The Lord has multiplied his instruments since that time you see, and I heartily trust he will bless and direct all efforts for the promotion of true religion.'

A shriek of terror from the beach sud-

denly interrupted the conversation. It seemed that a fishing-boat had been returning from Sunday traffic, and had capsized within a short distance of the shore; and it was feared that one of her crew, who was a bad swimmer, would meet with a watery grave. Providence, however, had ordered otherwise,—all were saved. But the man who had been nearest to the verge of eternity seemed least affected with his preservation from death. He ascribed it entirely to human means, and talked of it in terms that shewed utter absence of gratitude to that Being with whom are the issues of life and death. This circumstance produced a great impression upon Travis; and he sincerely pitied the men who had been on board that boat, and who would not consider the narrow escape they had had as a warning of mercy.

The ensuing winter was one of many

a hard struggle to him. Work of every kind slackened, and poverty increased. As a last resource Travis was obliged to part with his nets; and having now sold, as it were, his all to obtain the *pearl of great price*, (Matt. xiii. 46,) he awaited the issue with a depressed, but submissive spirit. Some one has beautifully observed, that 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity;' and never was its truth more fully exemplified than in the present instance.—One evening he returned home wearied with bodily exhaustion, and deep mental conflict. Of all his cares, he felt least able to contend with those which devolved upon him as a parent; and he often dreaded lest his little ones, through mere want, should be tempted to steal, and dishonour their heavenly Master. The children had reserved a share of their scanty and insufficient meal for their

father, but he could not taste it. Little did he at that moment think of the succour which the Almighty had in store for him. On the following morning a tradesman of the name of Carey, a person of considerable credit, desired to speak with him. He told him plainly that he wished to give him some permanent employment; and then asked him if he still retained his preference for a sea life.

'I feel partial to it, Sir,' said Travis, little anticipating what was to follow; 'I was bred to it you see, and one naturally clings to early habits, but I would willingly turn my hand to any honest calling.'

'It would be a pity to take you out of your old one,' returned Mr. Carey; 'you had far better remain as you are, an example to your brother seamen. I am building a small fishing-boat of which I am sole proprietor, it will shortly be com-

pleted, and if you are willing to take the charge of it, I have reason to believe I can trust you.'

Travis had been so often disappointed, that he could scarcely believe what he heard to be true. He was barely acquainted with Mr. Carey by sight, and he doubted whether there might not be some mistake. Under this impression, he replied, 'You are very kind, Sir, but perhaps you are not aware of the cause of my not having a berth at the present time.'

'I know the reason,' returned Mr. Carey; 'I have watched your conduct, and am glad to say it has been consistent. I may not possibly go along with you in all your views, but I respect your principles. You shall have the management of the boat on your own terms. I shall require the assistance of a man and boy besides yourself; let your son go with

you, and in regard to your other companion, choose whom you will.'

Any attempt to describe the feelings of Travis on this occasion would be in vain; his heart was too full for words to express his gratitude; and deeply did he feel at this moment, that *the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,* (Psalm xxxiv. 7,) and *that he will keep the feet of his saints.* (1 Sam. ii. 9.)

CHAPTER XIII.

JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, SAID I NOT UNTO THEE, THAT IF THOU WOULDEST BELIEVE THOU SHOULDEST SEE THE GLORY OF GOD?—John xi. 40.

I SHALL pass over an interval of a few weeks, and resume my narrative, when Travis was once more a fisherman, and his companions those of his own seeking. Chappell was his regular partner at sea, and under the happy influence of two men who feared God, and carried their religion into daily life, young Charles made his first voyage. A twelvemonth glided over unmarked by any peculiar incident. On week-days our fishermen laboured diligently for their earthly master; while every successive Sabbath be-

held them in the house of God attending divine worship, and drawing nearer in spirit to that eternal rest of which a well-spent Sabbath is the Christian's best foretaste, (Heb. vi. 9.) My readers must not suppose that Travis was exempt from all the cares of poverty. As his children grew up, they became proportionably more expensive, and it cost him many privations to educate and maintain them in the manner he wished to do. When the second boy had attained his thirteenth year, his father was desirous of finding him some regular employment. A fisherman offered to take the lad to sea; but Travis civilly declined on account of his neighbour's practical neglect of the religious observance of the Sabbath. In the course of the summer, an opportunity occurred for placing the little boy in service. A family who were spending the summer at the sea-side required the as-

sistance of a lad in the house during that time; and hearing they were people of respectable character, Travis gladly accepted the place for his son. On the first Sunday after the boy had been in service, he was out late in the evening when he met his father, who would not suffer him to stop but walked with him to the end of the street.

'Before we part, my boy, you must tell me how you like your place,' said Travis, affectionately.

'Oh, very well indeed, father; I never hear a bad or a cross word; I wish for nothing except it be less work on Sundays.'

Travis felt startled, and found upon inquiry that he had not been able to attend church once, nor had he had an hour to himself the whole day. He had sat up late on Saturday evening, because the family had company, and this had obliged

him to clean a number of articles the next forenoon. When his master returned from morning service, he gave him some notes to deliver, and while the bells were ringing for afternoon-service, the young ladies joined a party in a pleasure-boat, and desired him to carry their cloaks to the shore and await their return in an hour, to convey them home. Thus ended all hopes of church for the afternoon; and as the family dined late, the whole evening had been cut up with cares of this nature. Travis listened to the account with feelings of deep concern. He longed for an interview with the boy's master; but the lateness of the hour would not admit of it, and on the following morning, he was going early to sea. 'John,' said he, after a few moment's silence, 'this must not be; I lament that I was not more particular in my inquiries before you took this place, but I did not

suspect such a state of things. Take an early opportunity of asking your master's permission to attend public worship at least once every Sabbath, and if he refuse it, acquaint him respectfully with my wish that you should leave his service.'

'I am so little used to speak to strangers,' returned John, 'that I am afraid my master will think me impertinent: what must I say?'

'The plain truth in as civil a manner as you can: if your master be angry, take it submissively; and as long as you remain in his service, be faithful in the discharge of your most trifling duties. Remember, that Daniel minded his master's interests, though Darius was a heathen and *he* a worshipper of the true God.'

Here ended the conversation, and Travis returned home in company with a young neighbour, who seeing him look thoughtful, asked kindly if his son had

said any thing to make him unhappy. Travis related what had passed, and expressed his sorrow that worldly cares so often intruded themselves on the sacredness of the Sabbath.

'Very true,' returned his companion, who was a young man of education and good feeling, 'works of necessity and mercy make but a small part of the doings of many people on that day.'

'I believe many err thoughtlessly on this point,' said Travis; could they see one half the awful list of those whose dying confessions have traced their ruin to the neglect of the sabbath, I do believe they would shudder, not only at the manner in which they keep the day themselves, but in which they compel their servants to break it. What would become of needless labour at home, and needless journeys abroad, if brought to the test of Scripture!'

'If we really desire to act like Christians,'[1] resumed Travis, 'we must consider our Sunday habits both as regards ourselves and others; for if our hearts be so set on the pursuits of the week, that we cannot pass one day in seven apart from them, we are setting up an idol against the living God, and making a miserable preparation for eternity.'

[1] A pleasing instance has been afforded me of the two-fold benefits arising from Missionary enterprise.—A gentleman's steward who had been in the regular habit of transacting business on the Sabbath, attended a meeting of the Church Missionary Society, where allusion was made to the exemplary observance of the Lord's-day amongst the evangelized New Zealanders. The steward returned from the meeting, deeply impressed with a sense of his own inferiority. He felt himself little better than the money-changers in the temple, (John ii. 15, 16,) and from that time abandoned a practice so inconsistent with the Divine command, *to keep holy the sabbath day.*

Travis was left in suspense concerning his son until the following Saturday, when John was the first to welcome him on his return from sea.

'Father,' said he, 'I am to keep my place; my master gave me leave to come and tell you so. He desired me to say he was sorry I had been forced to labour so hard last Sunday, and that he would arrange matters differently for the future.'

A flush of pleasure brightened the countenance of Travis as he listened to these good tidings; and turning to a neighbour who washed for his family, he said, 'depend upon it, Mrs. Alderson, that if we simply follow the Lord's direction, we may safely trust him with the consequences.'

The person to whom he addressed these words was a kindly disposed but weak-minded woman, who as yet possessed very undefined notions of the nature of faith.

'Your case has proved it so, Alfred,' returned she; 'yet for all that, I durst not have asked such a favour of my son's master, lest he should have dismissed him.'

'Supposing he had,' returned Travis calmly; 'there would be no disgrace to your son or mine to leave service under such circumstances.'

'But you would wish to see your children well situated in the world, would you not?'

'Yes; but I would rather see them planted in the kingdom of God; and how can I hope for a blessing on my prayers for this end, if I willingly place them under the influence of bad habits and bad examples?'

'Well, I believe you are right,' returned Mrs. Alderson; but when work is scarce, and children plentiful, if they leave their places who can provide for them?'

'There is one who can and will provide for them,' said Travis.—*They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*, (Psalm xxxvi. 10.) Remember the new name conferred on the scene of Abraham's trial,—"Jehovah-jireh, or the Lord will provide," (Gen. xxii. 14.) How sweet an encouragement for believers in after ages.'

Mrs. Alderson remained silent for some moments. She was not quite easy in her own mind, for she had lately opened a small shop; and to increase her profits, she had been tempted to trespass on the sacred rest of the Sabbath. A tear glistened in her eye, as she observed, 'I fear I never considered this matter as I ought. All I can do, sometimes, barely suffices to procure me and mine the necessaries of life, and then I feel I must help myself or die.'

'Such would not be your feeling,' said

Travis gently, 'if you trusted in God, but it is quite a natural feeling where there is little faith.'

Mrs. Alderson blushed, and in a hurried manner observed, that she 'prayed not to be led into temptation.'

'God grant that we may never deliberately rush into it ourselves,' returned Travis.

The poor woman was much affected, by having her mind closely directed to a consideration of this subject; and she admitted that Sunday trading had been the means of drawing her aside from the plain command of God, and of rendering her more indifferent to holy things.

'Careless as you may think me,' she said, 'there are moments when I almost sink into despair, on thinking, how little love I have shown to God, and how much I have manifested for the world.'

'The Gospel will preserve us from

despair,' replied Travis, 'if we apply as we ought for an interest in its gracious promises. All who thirst are invited to take of the water of life freely. All who feel the burden of their sins are invited to come to Christ, and they are promised spiritual rest. Crosses and trials lose half their bitterness to those who have committed their way unto the Lord. Remember our Saviour's words,—*Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* If we believe in him, and obey his words, we shall assuredly acknowledge his glory. I myself am a living proof of the long-suffering, the tender mercy and faithfulness of my God.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH A SINNER DO EVIL AN HUNDRED TIMES AND HIS DAYS BE PROLONGED, YET SURELY I KNOW THAT IT SHALL BE WELL WITH THEM THAT FEAR GOD, WHICH FEAR BEFORE HIM.—(Eccles. viii. 12.)

IT was happy for Charles Travis that his eyes were early opened to the danger of bad example. Young as he was, when his playmate was convicted of theft, he was old enough to feel and to reflect; and the good impressions which the incident occasioned at that time, remained in after life. The baker, moved by George's tears, consented in that instance to release him, and for a while the latter appeared profitably affected; but his good resolutions were like the morning cloud. Per-

severance cannot be expected without principle, and poor George had no christian principle. At the age of fifteen he was hired by an inn-keeper in a populous town some distance from home. At first the novelty of his employment pleased him; but he had been too long habituated to idleness to relish for a continuance a life of steady industry. He became fond of gambling: and having in one instance ventured more than he possessed, on a wager, he lost it, and was ruined. At this crisis he endeavoured to relieve his necessities by robbing a fellow-servant: some trivial circumstance exposed his crime, and at the next assizes he was sentenced to be transported for life. He appeared at this period to manifest symptoms of contrition; and in a letter to his parents, he expressed an earnest desire to see them, before he was sent abroad, Andrew thought more of his son's dis-

grace than of the offence that incurred it; and under an impulse of pride, he disclaimed all affection for a convict. His wife felt differently, and endeavoured to raise money for the journey; but she had so often imposed upon benevolence by false pretences, that most people distrusted her; and in her now real distress, she met with many rebuffs. She was not, however, permitted to see her son again. A fortnight elapsed before her means would admit of the journey, and in that interval George was attacked with illness which in the awfully short space of two days terminated his life. Mr. Carey was settling some accounts with Alfred Travis when young Charles suddenly entered the room in tears. On perceiving his master, he withdrew, but Mr. Carey kindly desired him to come in and say any thing he wished. Charles could hardly speak for crying, but at length he

succeeded in making poor George's melancholy end intelligible.

Travis could easily sympathise with his son, for he was himself much affected. Mr. Carey left them together for a while, when, seeing Charles more composed, he asked a few further questions respecting his deceased neighbour. 'We were once favourite companions,' said Charles sighing deeply, 'all our play-hours were spent together, till happily for me, my father saw the danger and saved me in time.'

'I thank God that I became aware of it,' returned Travis with tears in his eyes.

'Oh, father, it would have made your heart ache to see George's parents,' continued Charles: 'When Mrs. Gill received the news of his death, she appeared almost out of her senses, and it was shocking to hear how she reproached her husband for refusing to see him. Andrew seemed at first quite stupified; but in a

little while he burst into a violent agony of grief, and accused her of having ruined George.'

'Both parents have cause for self-reproach,' said Mr. Carey; 'indeed I believe that most instances of youthful depravity arise from early habits and bad examples.'

'I remember a time when I envied George his earnings,' said Charles, thoughtfully, 'poor fellow, I little imagined that he would die after all in debt and in prison.'

'We all need reminding of the unprofitableness of sin,' said Mr. Carey: 'I will mention another example.—What think you of Michael Wilson?'

'My father's former master, sir?' said Charles.

'Yes, I scarcely know a plainer instance of the vanity of unhallowed gain; —Wilson's sins have brought temporal profits, it is true, but these very profits,

far from contributing to his real happiness, have been the means of increasing his pride, and rendering him more and more daringly profane.'

'Of all the consequences of wilful sin,' said Travis, 'nothing in this world is so dreadful as a heart left by God to its own wickedness.'

'Depend upon it, Charles,' said Mr. Carey, 'that the duties of our station are never so well, nor so happily fulfilled as when they are done in obedience to God.[1] I have seen this exemplified in your

[1] Among many excellent speeches which were made at the 'Chelsea Association for the Observance of the Sabbath,' none were more interesting than that of Mr. Chancellor, who is well known as one of the largest proprietors of carriages let out for hire in the neighbourhood of London. The following portion of his speech shews the happy result of a conscientious sacrifice:—'About four years and a half ago, it came into my mind that I was acting wrongly in allowing my public conveyances to run on the Sabbath day: but I

father, and I earnestly hope that you and many more may enter the same path with the conviction that, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.* (Psalm cxi. 10; xxiv. 22.)

had doubts what to do, for I knew that if I gave it up it would be a loss of £500 a year to me, and my family was large. I made it a subject of prayer to God, and at length my mind was made up on the subject. It is impossible to describe the peace and happiness which I have enjoyed since this resolution. I would not return to my former practice for ten thousand pounds. I now always pay my men early on Saturday morning, instead of Saturday night; and great is the benefit resulting from it. I used often to hear of their joining in riots at the public-houses on Saturday nights, but now nothing of the kind occurs. Our Sunday is really a day of rest; and it is delightful to me to see my men at church, and reading their bibles. I wish many of my neighbours might be induced to follow my example, for they would find happiness from it here; and I am sure they would in heaven.'

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